

GREETINGS FROM COOLIDGE SCHOOL

September 3, 2014

www.shrewsbury-ma.gov/schools/coolidge

Dear Families,

There are certain rituals that mark the return to school; today I am most mindful of all the sounds that signal our 400 students have returned. There are the exclamations of appreciation for friends' new outfits, the sure thump of bags of supplies against the legs of children as they arrive to school, and the squeak of new sneakers on the pristine gym floor. My favorite? Hearing the initial hesitation of voices singing in Chorus for the first time give way to the greater certainty of "Hey, we can do this!" as students realize they actually sound pretty good together. For the children, though, I'd bet that today's key sound was the siren, because we practiced our first fire drill.

Rehearsing what to do in tricky situations has become an important aspect of school. In addition to fire drills, in the coming weeks we'll practice weather drills and lock down procedures. Similarly, teachers will discuss how to handle peer conflicts and even bullying situations. With our first official drill behind us, I am confident that having practiced, our school community will be well prepared if ever we are confronted with crisis. There's good reason to think so. Yesterday's extreme weather at 3 had a minimal impact on dismissal, because staff and students alike cooperated so well. Similarly, this morning our entire school exited the building safely and silently within three minutes.

Please congratulate your child on how well s/he is learning new routines at school.

Sincerely,

Amy

Important Upcoming Dates:

Wednesday	August 27, First Day of School-Kindergarten
Friday	August 29, Teacher Professional Development Day-No School
Monday	September 1, Labor Day – No School
Wednesday	September 17, School Pictures
Tuesday	September 23, Curriculum Night, Grades 3 and 4,

6:30-7:30 pm

Tuesday & 2, 6:30	September 30, Curriculum Night, Kindergarten, Grades 1
Tuesday students	October 7, Early Release Day, 12:15 pm dismissal for
Thursday Bisk	October 9, Math Meeting for Parents with Dr. Richard
Monday	October 13, No School – Columbus Day

FYI

School Council

We are looking for parent representative(s) to join School Council. Our School Council is an advisory board comprised of teachers, parents, a community representative, and the building principal. The Council's job is to determine our school's needs and priorities. One of the largest tasks of our council is to develop our school improvement plan. School Council holds monthly meetings, typically in the evening from 6-7 pm. If you would like to volunteer your time, please send an email to me at aclouter@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us. If more than one parent volunteers, the PTO will hold an election for this position through a Monday/ blue folder ballot.

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL REMINDERS

Students leaving in the afternoon must also be dismissed in one of three ways:

1. On the bus
2. As a walker – students exit out the rear door
3. By using the pick-up procedure (see map below)- *by car*

➤ **Waiting for and picking up students in the main lobby or walking up to get students at parent pick up is not permitted.** This creates a significant safety concern for us as far as knowing with confidence that all students are dismissed properly, especially because the office is very busy near dismissal time. It is also an issue of fairness towards all families

– we cannot have some wait in the pickup line while others use a quicker method.

➤ **We also ask parents not to dismiss students as walkers and pick them up by car away from school grounds.** Again, the safety issue is paramount. Instead, please do consider carpooling as one way to help shorten the line.

For **parent pick-up** in the afternoons, auto traffic should circle through the playground and wait at the back door until dismissal begins to move toward to the front. **While waiting, please be respectful of neighborhood driveways and do not block them; please do not turn around in neighborhood driveways.** After pick-up, cars must leave via May Street. Since this is the same way our busses exit, it's important that drivers take direction from staff about when to turn. **No one should ever park in this area.**

Please do have your ID ready and your name card displayed. Staff will check to make sure that only parents and/or designees are picking up each child. Thanks for your patience as we welcome new families to Coolidge and learn new names.

While we understand that waiting in line can be frustrating for those of us in a hurry, it is unfair to allow a few to disregard this policy for convenience's sake, as one family's time is no more or less valuable than another's. Dismissing students through the office in order to avoid waiting in line violates our school community's value of "working together" and teaches children that following procedures is for others. **We ask that you remain patient and take it slow in order to make arrival and dismissal as safe as possible for everyone.**

We sincerely thank you for your cooperation in helping to ensure a safe and smooth dismissal.